

# Citizen Voting Age Population: A Discussion

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**Census**  
**2020**

# The CVAP: A Summary

- Special tabulation requested by US Dept of Justice
- Estimates total citizen voting age population by race & ethnicity
- Primary Purpose: Voting Rights analysis
- Census 2000 (based on long form- down to block group)
- ACS files using 5-year data- ACS 2005-2009 through ACS 2014-2018
  - *Will this continue post 2020?*
- **Current Schedule:** Post-2020 Census CVAP Special Tabulation will be published prior to July 31, 2021 in conjunction with PL 94-171

# CVAP 2020: Special Considerations

- Presidential directives on citizenship data
- American Community Survey (ACS) as prior data source
- Block level data- new geography
- New methods. Final methodology and data sources not released
- Administrative Records: Opportunities & Challenges
- Differential Privacy will be applied
- Bureau time constraints, in conjunction with covid19 and other challenges

# Citizenship Data Directives from Exec Office

1. Adding a question on citizenship to Census 2020- courts said no  
*Census 2020 does not ask about citizenship*
  2. Presidential Memo July 2019 on collecting info about citizenship status from admin records- *This will impact CVAP*
  3. July 21, 2020 - Memorandum on Excluding Illegal Aliens From the Apportionment Base Following the 2020 Census
- **Practical Implications:** Uncertainty and changes for Bureau regarding input data available & output data required

# Relation to Presidential Memo 2020

- ***July 21, 2020 - Memorandum on Excluding Illegal Aliens From the Apportionment Base Following the 2020 Census***
  - Doesn't directly impact production of CVAP
  - Unclear if or how CVAP process would impact production of data to states for apportionment purposes, should these data be produced by Bureau

# Relation to Presidential Memo 2019

## ***July 11, 2019 - Executive Order on Collecting Information about Citizenship Status in Connection with the Decennial Census***

- Use administrative records to determine citizenship status and connect to Census 2020 data
- Orders *"all agencies to share information requested by the Department to the maximum extent permissible under law."*
- Orders *"the establishment of an interagency working group to improve access to administrative records, with a goal of making available to the Department administrative records showing citizenship data for 100 percent of the population"*

## Relation to Presidential Memo 2019 cont.

- Orders Commerce Dept *"to strengthen its efforts, consistent with law, to obtain State administrative records concerning citizenship"*
- Suggests states may wish to use citizenship data, along with Census 2020 data, for redistricting purposes

# Implications of Memo 2019 for CVAP process

- Access to administrative data
  - Replace ACS data as source
  - Potential improvements to CVAP quality
  - Block level data
- Process and exact records to be used not yet revealed.
- Time constraints collecting records and determining new methods.



# CVAP & the American Community Survey

- ACS question on citizenship foundation of CVAP since 2009
- CNSTAT workshop 2012 on ACS, with experts and case studies of ACS for Voting Rights Act, noted ACS advantages:
  - Timely (annual) data, rather than decennial
  - Ability to combine with additional variables (e.g. language spoken at home)
  - Found ACS is producing valid estimates of CVAP
- Concerns about ACS:
  - Small sample size & MOEs for small areas (block groups)
  - Misreporting citizenship status may overestimate citizens (Brown et al. 2018)

# Block Level Data

- Prior to 2020, down to block groups
- Block level could help with redistricting and Voting Rights Analysis?
  - Done successfully in past at block group level
  - Potential advantage unclear. Worth the effort to go to blocks?
- Smaller geographic area, technical challenges
- Privacy concerns
  - CVAP data relate to politically sensitive question of immigrants (legal and undocumented) and where they live

# Methods

- Current documentation offers no detail on methods
  - “The final specifications and analysis of CVAP data sources are still under development and will not be released March 31, 2020”
- “Citizenship status will be determined using **statistical methodologies**, still under development, **and record linkages to a variety of administrative records**”
- Output same as prior CVAP- total voting age population by race/ethnic groups- for same geographies, down to block

# Methods cont.

- Data Sources: Census 2020, administrative records data, and “other possible census data”
- Which admin records are unclear, may include data from:

Social Security Administration, Internal Revenue Service, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Homeland Security, Department of State, Indian Health Services, Department of Justice, and the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

State administrative records: TANF, SNAP, WIC, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, and State Driver’s Licenses.

# Methods: Administrative Records

- Reliance on administrative records shows promise but challenges
- Brown et al. (2018)- CES 18-38 (Bureau report)
  - Differences b/t survey responses vs admin data
  - Surveys may overestimate citizenship?
  - Admin records (especially SSA) underestimate citizens (naturalizations missing/delay)
    - Gaps in (2018) admin records for estimating citizenship***
  - Would rely on imputations for missing records: 35-40 million?
    - Imputation depends on what records and methods***
- Perhaps better with more records. Don't know. Timeline realistic?

# Differential Privacy

- DP will be applied to race/ethnicity data & CVAP data will also undergo DP at all levels of geography
- “The privacy-loss budget [PLB] for the 2020 CVAP will be included in the total privacy-loss budget allowed for the 2020 Census.”
- How much privacy loss budget will be allocated to citizenship data? TBD
  - Any PLB applied here will take away from PLB (accuracy) elsewhere in 2020 data
- Balance privacy & accuracy- ***Special privacy concerns, sensitive data***

# Summary:

## Time Constraints, Challenges & Transparency

- Changes to data input/output– uncertainty in plan/process
  - Political tension and court involvement
- Covid-19 and related challenges in working conditions
- DP implementation
- Collection/processing/matching of admin records big job
- Methodology still unclear, difficult to review/evaluate/test
- Planned documentation was March 31, 2020 - still pending

*SHORT TIMELINE given these conditions- Is this realistic to produce? Leads to lack of transparency regarding process. Neither CSAC nor users can evaluate.*

# Questions

- How much privacy loss budget will be allocated to citizenship data?
  - Impact privacy budget for other variables
  - Impact accuracy of data
  - Probably not highest priority use case
  - ***Sensitive data- privacy is important***



# Questions, cont.

- Will ACS-based CVAP continue post 2020? Why or why not? How would the ACS-based estimate (2015-2019) compare to 2020 CVAP file? Why not produce it?
- What administrative records will be used?
- How good are linkages matching census records to admin records?
- Follow up study, like Brown et al. (2018)- CES 18-38 (Bureau report)?
- Will there be demonstration data comparing to past CVAP (similar to the other DP demonstration data and metrics)?